utilizing locally grown raw material and providing "Hands-on" experience at such production cum training centres, while according priority to SC/ST/OBC and women minorities candidates.

The Scheme for Strengthening of Institutions is aimed at strengthening of existing institutes like Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology & establishing National Institute of Food Technology and Entrepreneurship Management (NIFTEM). The objective of NIFTEM is to promote cooperation and networking amongst existing institutions both within the country & international bodies, create a complete data base on domestic resources and bring in international best practices for improving the food processing sector. Besides above mentioned institutions, two Boards have been set up under the Ministry *i.e* Indian Grape Processing Board and National Meat and Poultry Processing Board under the scheme.

In addition to the above mentioned schemes, certain fiscal incentives have been given to the food processing industry. Some of these are exemption to fruits and vegetable processing units from paying income tax, reduction of excise duty on ready to eat packaged foods and instant food mixes from 16% to 8%.There is automatic approval for 100% foreign equity in food processing sector.

Financial assistance for FPIs in Rajasthan

1688. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:
DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTREIS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of applications received by Government during the last three years from Rajasthan, requesting financial assistance for setting up food processing units;

(b) the total number of applications cleared, so far;

(c) the total financial assistance, alongwith the subsidy, provided for those units, so far; and

(d) the total number of beneficiaries?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (d) Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MFPI) extends financial assistance in the country in the form of grant-in-aid to implementing agencies/entrepreneurs @ 25% of the cost of Plant & Machinery and Technical Civil Works subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs in general areas and 33.33% subject to a maximum of Rs. 75 lakhs in Difficult areas under the Scheme of Setting up/Modernization/Expansion of food processing industries.

Earlier all the applications for such grants were received from all over the country through the State Nodal Agencies in the Ministry. These applications were then Centrally processed and grants disbursed in the Ministry itself. This used to involve avoidable delays. Hence, with a view to enlarge the outreach of this scheme to each hook and corner of the country, accelerate the pace of disposal and to take the Government to door steps of the people, the whole procedure of receipt of

application under the Scheme, its-appraisal and calculation of grant eligibility as well as disbursement of funds has been completely decentralized from 2007-08. Under this new procedure any entrepreneur /applicant can file application with the neighborhood Bank branch/Financial Institutions (FIs). The Bank/FIs then appraise the applications and then calculate the eligible grant amount as per the detailed guidelines given to them by the Ministry in this regard. Banks/FIs appraisal report and recommendation for the grant is transmitted to the Ministry through E-Portal which has been established for this purpose. After the recommendation is received from any Bank/FIs through the E-Portal Ministry sanctions the same and transfers the funds also through the same E-Portal.

Under the decentralized procedure, the applications are received directly by the Banks/FIs, hence the data for receipt of the applications for 2007-08 and 2008-09 is not maintained centrally by the Ministry. However, for the State of Rajasthan, during the last three years *i.e.* 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09, out of 152 applications received under the scheme, 107 applications were approved for which an amount of Rs. 1589.11 lakhs were disbursed.

Viewership for Doordarshan

1689. SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the current viewership for Doordarshan, including regional kendras, in comparison to other private channels;

(b) whether there has been any evaluation of the content and production quality of the Doordarshan programmes; and

(c) whether there is any plan of action/strategy to improve the quality of its production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI CHOUDHURY MOHAN JATUA): (a) A Statement (*See* below) regarding TAM Rating of viewership showing comparison of Doordarshan National including Regional Channels with other Private Channels is enclosed.

(b) Prasar Bharati has informed that evaluation of content and production quality is a continuous process. Their Audience Research Units are doing evaluation of programmes from time to time.

(c) Prasar Bharati has informed that efforts are being made to improve the quality of its production by acquiring quality software from various professional software houses/producers through SFC Scheme; outsourcing good Feature Films for telecast on DD-1 on different themes; outsourcing better talent for in-house production of programme and improving transmission quality with digitalization of the studio equipment and transmission.